



Isabella Mendes Lira
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IMSTEAM Education
Founder/Owner
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Thursday, February 18, 2021

Attn: Toni Walker and the Appropriations Committee
Ref: Bill Number HB 6439

Dear Toni Walker and Appropriations Committee,

As a music educator, I understand the value of music in our community, especially to our children. Music Haven is an organization that provides not only music education, but a place for children, who would otherwise not have this opportunity, to learn, to be seen, to be heard and to express themselves. This opportunity is given to these families at no cost to them, tuition free, by Music Haven.

Equipped with an excellent team of teaching artists, caring and devoted administrators and managers, Music Haven is an essential organization for the city of New Haven, and it is absolutely imperative that their funding is made a priority every single year.

When I learned this vital organization was not included in the funding distribution, I was, to say the least, appalled, especially when other listed organizations who did receive funding, are known to already receive private money from other sources. These sources include, but are not limited to, tuition (meaning that families who are attending lessons, are able to afford lessons and therefore are not need-based). In other words, organizations who do not have the same financial need as Music Haven does. This isn't to say that other organizations aren't deserving, but it is to demonstrate and strongly emphasize that Music Haven should be the priority.

The opportunity that Music Haven provides to the community is fundamental to the well-being of not only these children, and their families, but also to the City of New Haven and consequently to society as whole.

Music embodies and teaches science, technology, engineering, (STEM), arts (STEAM), wellness, culture, history, geography, brain development, kindness, justice and so much more. Music is essential to education and Music Haven is giving families the opportunity to the families that aren't able to afford this opportunity, which is really, a right.

I am writing to ask you to please, correct this 'mistake' of a promised that wasn't fulfilled and to do the right thing. Ensure that Music Haven receives the funding that was promised for this year, and any years missed, in addition to subsequent years. This is called reparations; this is called doing the right thing, this is the responsibility with humanity.

Please prioritize Music Haven in your funding every single year, because Music Haven is changing lives.

Sincerely,

Isabella Mendes Lira

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Isabella Mendes Lira'.